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Dr M: Indonesians must observe local regulations

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PENANG: Indonesians in the country must observe Malaysian laws just like in other nations, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"They (Indonesians) have to observe not only the laws of the country but also the laws in other countries.

"Other countries also have very strict laws on illegal immigrants," the Prime Minister said when asked whether anti-Malaysia sentiments in Indonesia erupted following the implementation of stricter laws on

immigrants recently.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on reports of an Indonesian group protesting outside the Malaysian embassy in Jakarta on Sunday against Kuala Lumpur's decision to whip illegal immigrants. The protestors burned a Malaysian flag and almost toppled the main gate of the embassy.

The protestors, numbering about 50 and calling themselves Laskar Merah Putih, after the colours of the Indonesian flag, also chanted slogans and handed over a protest letter to an embassy official.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia

would not send an official protest to the Indonesian government over the incident, adding it was unnecessary because it was an isolated one and did not reflect Jakarta's stand on the issue.

"There are 220 million people in Indonesia and the chaos was caused by only a handful of its people who are extreme. Certainly, there are bound to be bad apples and irresponsible people in a country with such a big population.

"They do not represent the Indonesian government and I do not see the need for us to respond to the incident," he told reporters at a press

conference after attending a state government recognition lunch in conjunction with Penang's 30th year of industrial growth.

Also present at the function were his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Dr Mahathir also echoed the advice of Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar asking Malaysians to refrain from visiting Indonesia.

He also warned that the Government would revoke the permanent

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exploiting immigrant issue, says Umno Youth

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resident status of foreigners who were involved in serious crimes in the country.

"We can revoke their PR status if they are found guilty of committing serious crimes," he said when asked to comment on reports that PR status or citizenship could not be revoked if holders were found to have committed an offence under the Immigration Act 1959163.

The report, quoting Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin, also said the foreigners risked losing the status if they breached stipulated conditions for the award of the status.

Dr Mahathir, who was on a day-long official visit to Penang, was welcomed by about 1,500 people, mostly Barisan Nasional supporters, when he arrived at the Penang International Airport.

In Kuala Lumpur, Umno Youth criticised Indonesia's Upper House chairman Amien Rais for his role in inciting hatred among Indonesians for Malaysia.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein said the movement would hold Amien "fully accountable" if the ties between the two countries worsened.

"Amien Rais has been exploiting the issue with the help of certain sections of the Indonesian media," he said after chairing the National Youth Consultative Council.

He said Amien was using the issue to seek popularity for the coming Indonesian presidential election.

Hishammuddin, who is Youth and Sports Minister, also hoped the Indonesian government would take stern action against those responsible for burning the Malaysian flag and damaging the embassy.